

Chapter 27

Value Orientations in the World of Visual Art: An Exploration Based on Latent Class and Correspondence Analysis

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1. The study and the theoretical frame of reference

The social system of avant-garde art is often described by sociologists as a highly individualistic field, with tendencies towards anomie and anarchism, and a distance or even hostility to the communitarian values characteristic for the middle-classes, like family, religion, or nation, as well as to main-stream symbols of social status. Though widely diverging in theoretical style and explanations given, the theories of Pierre Bourdieu (1986, 1993) and Daniel Bell (1976) converge in emphasizing the individualism of artists and intellectuals participating in the artistic field. Both theories also maintain that the refusal of traditional bourgeois conventions, preferences and values is characteristic for avant-garde artists and the intellectuals (critics, curators) supporting them (cf. Tarnai & Wuggenig, 1995).

Some art critics and sociologists, however, claim that in the 80's, fundamental changes in the artistic field have taken place. Suzi Gablik (1985), a critic, writes that the forces of professionalism, bureaucracy, and commercialism have „caused avant-garde art to lose its power of rebellion“ (Gablik, 1985, p. 56f.). And Diana Crane (1987), author of a study about the New York art world, concludes that as major consequences of changes in the social situation of the artist as well as in the political and social importance of the arts in general, „the artistic role ceased to be that of an avant-garde with its concomitant overtones of alienation from popular culture and middle-class values. ... Instead, they internalized values and goals associated with the middle class and with popular culture“ (Crane, 1987, p. 11).

One of the interests of our empirical study, referring to the art worlds of Vienna and Hamburg, was to examine whether the assumptions about the social and normative integration of avant-garde art can be generalized and hold true for the European context. Most of the literature about art worlds differentiates between center and periphery, i.e., between the professional (producers, mediators) and the general public (cf. Rosenberg, 1982). Bourdieu (1993) refers to the center of the field and not to the general public, when he underlines the ascetism, the moral agnosticism and the negation of bourgeois taste. The same is true of Bell's assumptions (Bell, 1976) about the radical individualism, the hedonism and the hostility towards bourgeois values.

If an avant-garde subculture still exists, the values and preferences that are thought to be constitutive for the social system of art should be more widespread in the center than in the periphery of the field. On the other hand, if it is true that producers and mediators of avant-garde art meanwhile are socially integrated to the extent Gablik (1985) and Crane (1987) assume, differences in value orientations between the center and the periphery of the art world should also have vanished.

The empirical investigations which we use here to deal with the question whether center-periphery differences still exist or have dissolved, took place in 1993 and 1994, first in Vienna, the Austrian capital, then in Hamburg, the second largest German city which has nearly the same size as Vienna. The study is based on random samples of visitors of important exhibitions of international contemporary art in these two cities which attract a professional public, consisting of artists, critics, curators and dealers, as well as a general art public which, to a high proportion, is an academic population.

The response rates for the largeley standardized questionnaires, which were sent to the addresses collected in the art exhibitions, amounted to 42% in Vienna and to 55% in Hamburg. Since we concentrate on comparisons of attitudes in the Austrian and the German art world, foreign visitors of the exhibitions were excluded from the two samples. Thus, the maximum sample size for the analyses presented in this contribution amounts to $n = 616$ in Vienna, and to $n = 583$ in Hamburg. Since it is not possible here to present all our results on value orientations we have concentrated on one important scale only.

2. The traditionalism scale

This scale which is labeled „traditionalism“ measures the degree of identification with communitarian values and with mainstream-symbols of social status. It is based on six items. The response format of the items is of the Likert-type with four categories.

Four items of the scale refer to the subjective importance of traditional „non-egoistical“ values (family, religion, nation) in the sense of Emile Durkheim (1961), two items to status symbols (importance of owning an apartment/house, and of a car). Persons high on individualism and with anti-bourgeois tendencies in the sense of Bourdieu (1986, 1993) and Bell (1976), should identify less with these values and objects.

<i>Question: What makes life worth living ?</i>				
<i>What do you find especially important, and what's less important</i>				
Items and labels ("") in Figures 1a, 1b	Vienna		Hamburg	
	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)
Having children ("Children")	2.12	(1.01)	2.24	(1.03)
Having a strong religious conviction ("Religion")	2.99	(1.01)	3.15	(0.92)
Having a motherland ("Nation")	2.81	(1.01)	3.27	(0.82)
Involvement in a partnership ("Partnership")	1.62	(0.71)	1.64	(0.74)
Owning an apartment or house ("House")	2.42	(1.03)	2.87	(0.94)
Car ("Car")	2.95	(0.94)	2.93	(0.95)

Categories : 1: very important, 2: fairly important, 3: fairly unimportant, 4: totally unimportant

Table 1: The traditionalism-scale. Mean scores of the items for the samples of Vienna ($n = 501$) and Hamburg ($n = 524$)

The details of the operationalization are given in Table 1, which also includes a first rough comparison of the Vienna and the Hamburg sample based on the mean scores and the standard deviation (SD) of the six items (only persons who gave answers to all six items).

There are only small differences between the two populations. The German art public identifies a bit less with traditional values. The strongest difference with regard to collective

values concerns national identification, which in general is much higher in Austria than in Germany (cf. Plasser & Ulram, 1993).

3. Results of latent class analysis for ordinal data

The latent class analysis (LCA) for ordinal data is an integration of latent trait and latent class models developed by Rost (1988a, 1988b) (see section 2.1 in chapter 1). The computer program LACORD (Rost, 1990) includes eight models. This program is used for the following analyses: Model 1 in LACORD corresponds to the rating scale model (Andrich, 1978, see eq. (40) in chapter 1), model 2 to the dispersion model (Andrich, 1982) and model 3 to the model of successive intervals (Rost, 1988c). Model 4 has no assumptions about the order of the thresholds. In each case the threshold distances are assumed to be the same for all classes (class independent models). In contrast, models 5 to 8 are class dependent equivalents of the class independent models 1 to 4.

As a first step, the best fitting model was identified which also includes the search for the appropriate number of classes. The fit of models is evaluated by the Best-Information-Criterion (BIC) (cf. Read & Cressie, 1988). A low BIC-index indicates a better model fit than higher values. The goodness-of-fit indices and statistics (BIC, Likelihood and Nparm: number of parameters) for the five best fitting models are presented in Table 2.

<i>Sample Vienna (N=501)</i>				
BIC	Model	Classes	Likelihood	Nparm
7246.640	5	3	-3542.504	26
7256.843	5	4	-3519.631	35
7283.827	5	5	-3505.148	44
7284.919	1	4	-3552.319	29
7287.909	1	3	-3575.572	22
Saturated Model			-2892.023	

<i>Sample Hamburg (N=524)</i>				
BIC	Model	Classes	Likelihood	Nparm
7316.380	5	3	-3576.791	26
7322.277	5	4	-3551.562	35
7336.291	5	5	-3530.393	44
7339.399	1	3	-3600.823	22
7340.031	1	4	-3579.224	29
Saturated Model			-2974.818	

Table 2: Goodness-of-fit indices and statistics for the five best models

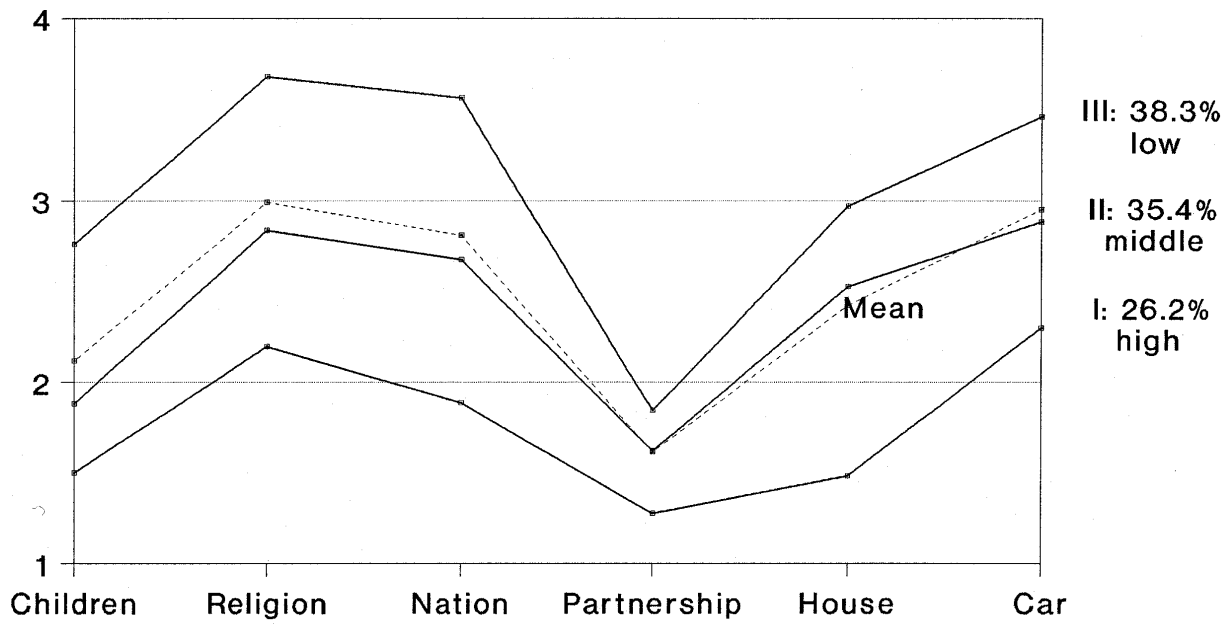
The results of both samples show a remarkable similarity. The order of models and number of classes is almost identical. For both samples the rating scale model in the class-dependent mode (Model 5 in LACORD) and three classes are to be preferred. The thresholds in all classes are well ordered with the exception of one case: In the Austrian sample the class with high traditionalism indicates a disordered third and second threshold. This is due to the fact that the probability for category 4 „totally unimportant“ is near zero in four of the six items in this class. In each sample the class with „middle“ traditionalism has the greatest threshold distances (see Table 3), indicating that these people seldom use the two extreme response categories.

<i>Vienna</i>				
Traditionalism		* Thr. 1*	* Thr. 2*	* Thr. 3*
low	Cl. III:	0.47	-0.20	-0.27
middle	Cl. II:	1.76	0.24	-2.01
high	Cl. I:	0.32	-0.26	-0.06

<i>Hamburg</i>				
Traditionalism		* Thr.1*	* Thr.2*	* Thr.3*
low	Cl. III:	0.59	-0.28	-0.31
middle	Cl. II:	2.09	0.15	-0.70
high	Cl. I:	0.55	0.15	-0.70

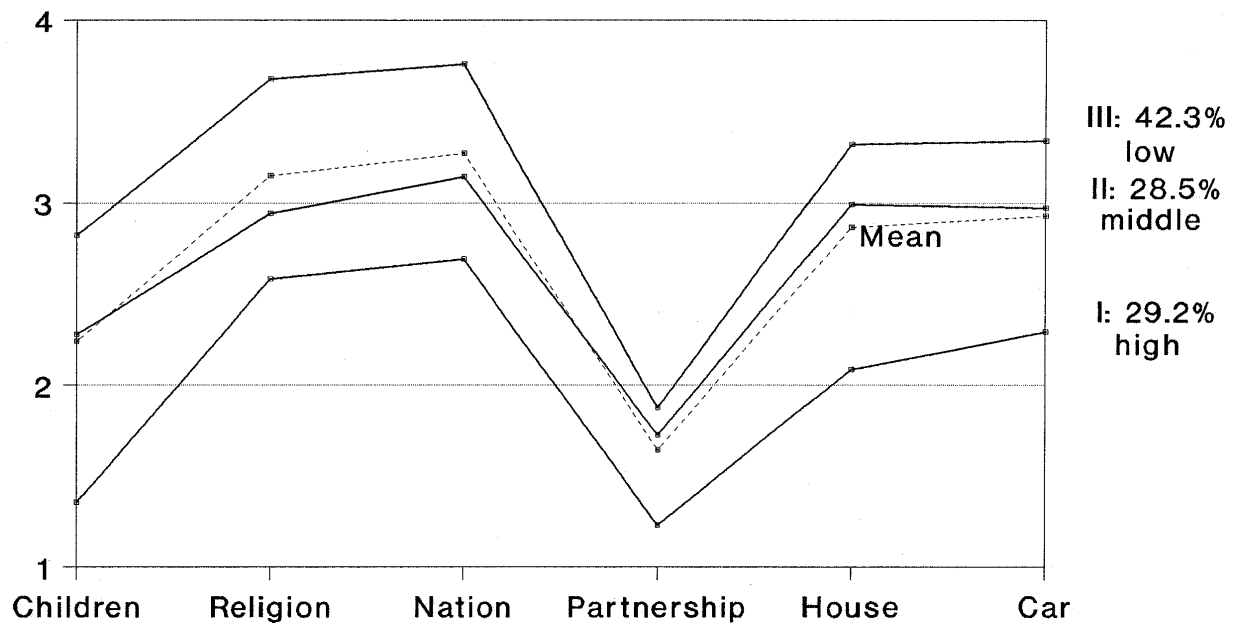
Table 3: Latent class analysis for ordinal data: Threshold parameters (Thr.) for traditionalism

In both samples the profiles of the expected item scores (the means of the category-probabilities) which characterize the structure of traditionalism do not intersect, i. e. the classes are ordered. Moreover, the differences between the classes are very similar and also the middle classes display a profile which is similar to the profiles of the item means. The class sizes (which are estimates of the proportions in the population) show only small differences. The maximum difference is 6.9%.



1/2 = Very/fairly important; 3/4 = Fairly/totally unimportant

Figure 1a: Traditionalism Vienna (Lacord Model 5)



1/2 = Very/fairly important; 3/4 = Fairly/totally unimportant

Figure 1b: Traditionalism Hamburg (Lacord model 5)

A more detailed inspection reveals some interesting results. In the class with high traditionalism (the lowest profile), the subjects in the Vienna sample (class I) show a higher degree of traditionalism than subjects in the corresponding class I of the Hamburg sample. The most striking difference between the Austrian and the German sample is the degree of

national identification. In Vienna, the importance of nation in the „middle“ class II is as high as in class I of the Hamburg sample. In a similar, but less pronounced manner, this is also true for holding a strong religious conviction and owning an apartment or house. On the other hand, the largest degree of similarity between both art worlds concerns the importance of an involvement in a partnership.

4. Results of correspondence analysis

In the next step we used simple correspondence analysis (CA) (cf. Greenacre, 1993) to explore whether traditionalism is associated with center (the professional members) and periphery of the art worlds. CA which is an analogue to principal component analysis for ordinal and nominal data is mainly a graphical technique for analyzing and visualizing data. In the graphical representations of CA the rows and columns of the data matrix are displayed as points in low-dimensional vector spaces (cf. Greenacre & Blasius, 1994).

The row variable of the matrix consists of the three classes with low, middle and high traditionalism. Also those who did not give an answer to one or more of the items of the traditionalism-scale were considered in the row of the matrix.

The column variable has four categories which were formed by a cross-classification of two dichotomous variables. One of these variables is the position in the art world. It differentiates between center and periphery on the basis of a question asking how intensively one is occupied with contemporary fine arts. Those who responded „almost every day“ were classified as center, the rest as periphery. The validity of this measure was tested by means of different indicators, like being an artist, critic or curator, having studied fine arts at art schools, having many artists as friends, visiting many openings and being familiar with contemporary art. All these indicators turned out to be highly correlated with that measure.

In the Vienna sample the second dichotomous variable separates those living in Vienna and those coming from other Austrian cities. The proportion of visitors from the Austrian provinces is 34.6%. In the German sample the visitors from Hamburg were differentiated from the minority coming from outside (39.5%) in an analogous way. In Austria, the capital Vienna is the only big city (all other Austrian cities having less than 400 thousand inhabitants). In the German sample nearly all visitors from outside of Hamburg come from towns smaller than 800 thousand inhabitants. Our general hypothesis was that size of town should matter regarding traditionalism, mainly because of the lower degree of social control in the bigger cities which facilitates individualism and the formation of subcultures (cf. Wirth, 1938). In the Austrian sample we expected the differences to be more pronounced than in the German sample since Austria outside of Vienna is much less urbanized than the northern and north-western regions of Germany (with cities like Bremen, Kiel, Hanover, Cologne, Duesseldorf) where the visitors of art exhibitions in Hamburg mainly come from.

The proportion of the visitors classified as center varies between 22.3% in Hamburg and 34% in the German population not living in Hamburg. In Austria, 30.4% of the Viennese visitors and 24.2% of those coming from outside were classified as center in the art world..

4.1 Correspondence analysis for the Austrian sample

Figure 2a refers to the Austrian art world. It is a symmetric display based on the numeric results of a simple correspondence analysis performed with SimCA 2 (Greenacre, 1990). The four art world groups - *Vienna and center in the art world* (labeled als VIENNA CENTER), *Vienna and periphery in the art world* (VIENNA PERIPHERY), *other Austrian cities and center in the art world* (ELSE CENTER) and *other Austrian cities and periphery in the art world* (ELSE PERIPHERY) - are represented as black squares; high, middle and low traditionalism as white squares with numbers corresponding to the labeling in Figure 1a, and *no answer* as a white circle.

Nearly all of the total inertia is represented in the plot (99.3%). The first axis is much more important, explaining about 85% of the inertia. When the row contributions (CTR) are considered, the first axis is determined on the left side by high traditionalism (CTR = 0.36) and on the right side by low traditionalism (CTR = 0.54), thus showing the opposition between high and low traditionalism which we are mainly interested in.

It is quite evident that both center and periphery and residence in and outside of Vienna are associated with traditionalism. „Else periphery“ is situated on the left side of „else center“ and „Vienna periphery“ on the left side of „Vienna center“. Furthermore, the two parts of the Vienna public are situated on the right side of the vertical axis, while the two parts of the visitors living in the Austrian provinces are situated on the left side. On the basis of an additive model of the effects of center/periphery in the art world and living and not living in Vienna, one would expect that in the „center“ of Vienna the proportion of those rating high on traditionalism is lowest and of those rating low on traditionalism is highest. The same should apply vice versa for the „periphery“ of the provinces. This is clearly demonstrated in Figure 2a. However, there is also some interaction in the data since the distance between the two Viennese groups is greater than the distance between „center“ and „periphery“ in the province. The „center-periphery“ differences are stronger in the Austrian capital than in the Austrian provinces.

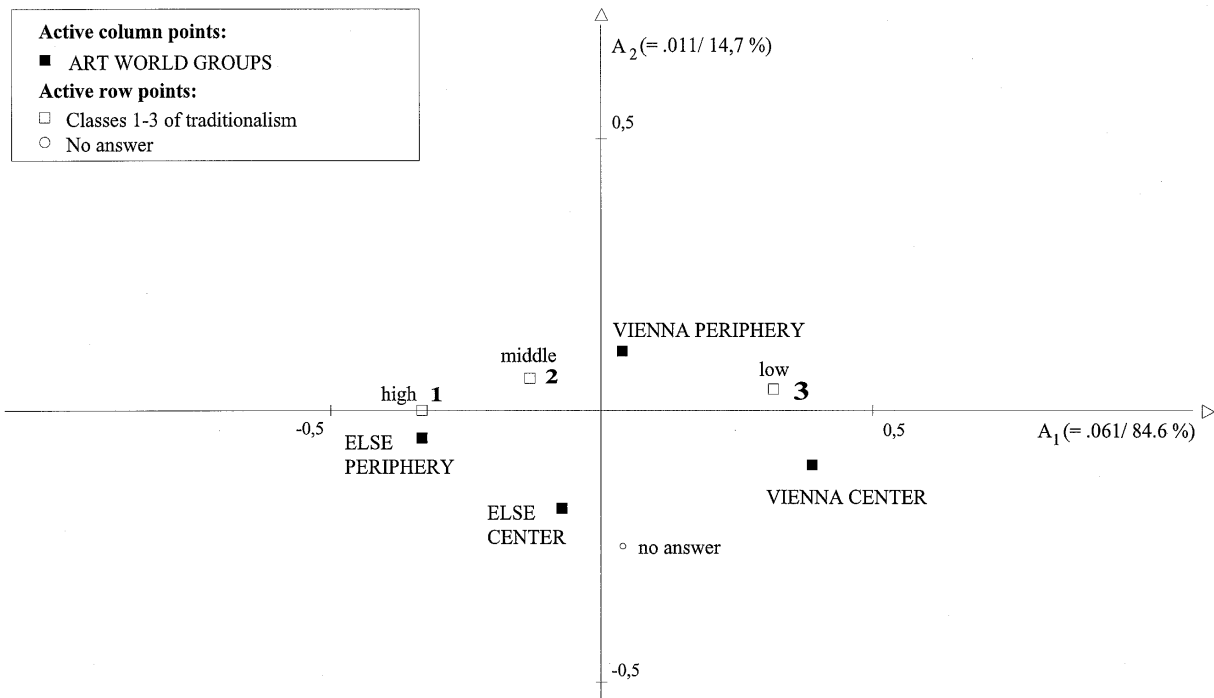


Figure 2a: Correspondence analysis of traditionalism (3 latent classes) with center and periphery of art world members in Austria (Vienna vs. else). (First and second axis, 99,3% of total inertia represented)

The second axis is determined on the negative side by „no answer“ in one or more of the six items (CTR = 0.82). The refusal to answer is most specific for those being part of the center of the art world not living in Vienna and is lowest among those in the Vienna „periphery“.

4.2 Correspondence analysis for the German sample

When we turn to the results in the Hamburg sample, again almost all of the inertia is represented in Figure 2b (97.9%). The first axis shows the contrast of high and low traditionalism. On the left side it is strongly determined by high traditionalism (CTR = 0.73), and on the right side by low (CTR = 0.18). An important difference to the Vienna sample concerns the variance explained. In the Vienna sample the inertia explained by the first and the second axis amounts to $0.061 + 0.011 = 0.072$, in the German sample only to $.012 + .004 = .016$. This indicates that the associations are much weaker.

Apart from the much weaker associations, there are some similarities with the results in Austria: The „center“ of the Hamburg art world is situated right from the periphery of Hamburg which implies a higher proportion with low traditionalism. Also, those belonging to the „center“ coming from outside of Hamburg are situated right from those belonging to the „periphery“. As in the Austrian case, the differences between center and periphery in the art world are more pronounced in the big city. The main effect of living in a big city can also be seen. Both points representing the Hamburg visitors are situated right from the points representing the visitors living outside of Hamburg.

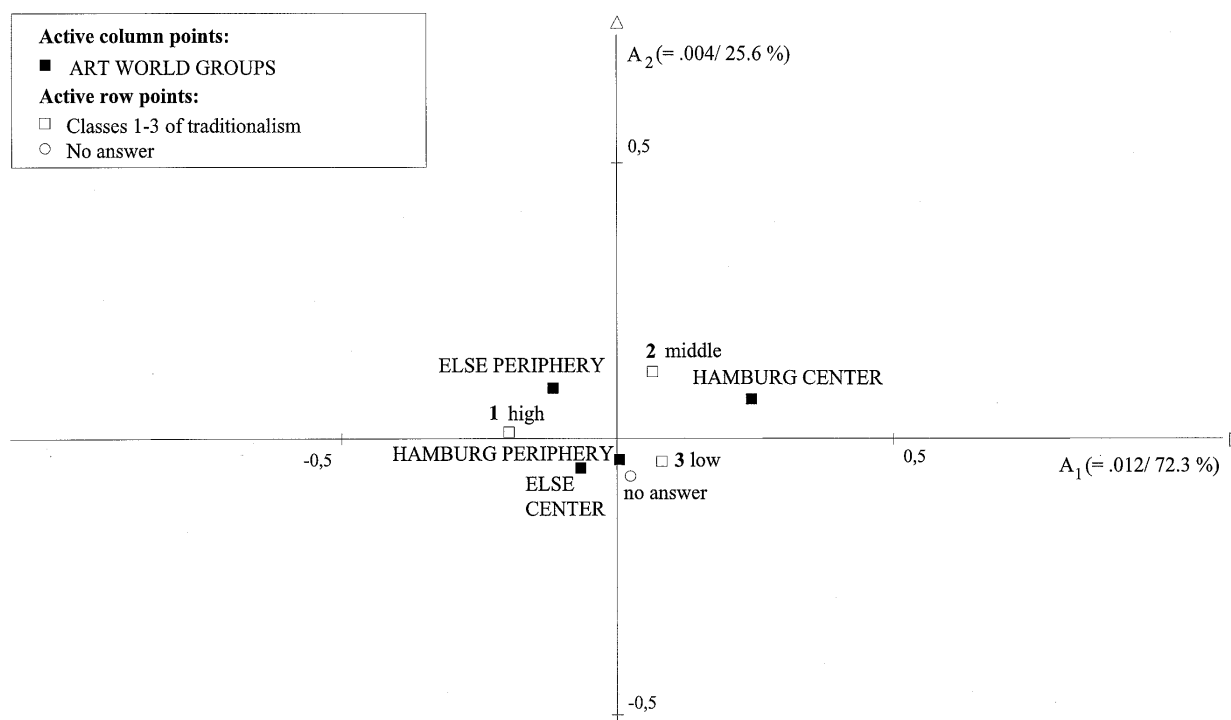


Figure 2b: Correspondence analysis of traditionalism (3 latent classes) with center and periphery of art world members in Germany (Hamburg vs. else). (First and second axis, 97,9% of total inertia represented)

On the positive side, the vertical axis which shows only very weak contrasts, is determined by middle traditionalism ($CTR = 0.67$). The two groups with the highest proportion of middle traditionalism are „Hamburg center“ and „else periphery“.

In both samples there is evidence for the „center“ being less traditionally oriented than the „periphery“. The difference between „center“ and „periphery“ in both cases is also greater in the art worlds of the big cities. As was expected, there is a greater gap between visitors from Vienna and visitors from other Austrian cities than between visitors from Hamburg and visitors from outside. However, in view of the weak associations between „center“ and „periphery“ in the Hamburg sample, the hypothesis that the center of the art world in northern Germany is a subculture with specific values (stronger self-orientation, negation of bourgeois values and main-stream status symbols) is not confirmed convincingly.

5. Conclusion

In view of the results in the Austrian sample, the assumptions of Crane (1987) and Gablik (1985) regarding the assimilation of the artistic and intellectual milieu of avant-garde art to the values and preferences of the „middle-class“ or to the „predominant values“ of the society can not be generalized to the European context. The center of the Vienna art world is characterized by the individualistic and anti-bourgeois tendencies described by Bell (1976) and Bourdieu (1986). It has a higher proportion of persons with low traditionalism and a lower proportion with high traditionalism, as defined by means of the LCA. On the other hand, the results in the German sample show that differences between center and periphery of

the art world with regard to traditionalism are so small that it is not possible to speak of a subculture in the case of Hamburg.

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